



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: June 1, 2011 (11-13)

Contact: Jason Kelly (360) 902-1815

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

Visit our Web site at: agr.wa.gov

Washington farm exports reach record pace

OLYMPIA – Exports of Washington-grown products have reached a new high. From October 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011, the value of Washington-origin farm and seafood products has set a record pace.

Washington food exports were worth \$1.91 billion in the last quarter of 2010, a figure matched in the first quarter of 2011. Each quarter represents a new record, beating the previous record of \$1.89 billion set in the third quarter of 2008.

“We have worked incredibly hard to promote Washington products and increase our exports – most recently with a 10-day trade mission to China and Vietnam – and our efforts are paying off,” Gov. Chris Gregoire said. “I commend our Washington state growers, who have rightly earned the reputation of producing the finest quality products in the world. Their tireless work to market our products overseas will help spur economic development and job growth here at home.”

Food export sales to China and Hong Kong grew to \$247 million during the recent October to March period, up 29 percent from \$191 million during the same period in 2009/10.

Gov. Gregoire has charged the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) with expanding exports of farm products as a component of her Washington Export Initiative. WSDA has set a goal to assist an additional 1,000 food and agriculture companies and to make \$300 million in export sales by 2015.

Numerous factors contributed to the recent success: leading Washington commodities had large harvests in 2010, while the low value of the dollar made U.S. farm commodities more competitive in the marketplace. Global demand for Washington products remains strong.

“Because our growers produce the highest quality foods at competitive prices, they continue to win new customers the world over,” said WSDA Director Dan Newhouse. “Washington’s agriculture economy has long depended on international customers for a considerable share of revenues, so the return of record export sales is great news. With our strategic location, ideal growing conditions and ingenuity of our entrepreneurs, we’re poised to pursue our numerous advantages.”

From October 1 to March 31, the leading export destinations for Washington agriculture products, dollar value of those exports and top three export commodities were:

- Japan – \$794 million, (wheat, hay, potatoes)
- Canada – \$592 million, (seafood, apples, vegetables)
- China/Hong Kong – \$247 million, (seafood, potatoes, apples)
- Philippines – \$211 million, (wheat, dairy, potatoes)
- Taiwan – \$187 million, (wheat, apples, potatoes)
- Mexico – \$152 million, (apples, dairy, potatoes)
- Indonesia – \$150 million, (wheat, apples, dairy)
- Korea – \$140 million, (hay, potatoes, animal products)

MORE

The WSDA International Marketing Program helps small and medium-sized businesses launch new export sales by introducing Washington sellers to foreign buyers through international trade missions and trade shows, providing export training and counseling, and assisting exporters to resolve trade barriers and market impediments.

In 2011, WSDA will use federal grants to develop new export opportunities by hosting in-bound foreign trade missions from China, the Middle East and Taiwan, and to fund outbound agriculture trade missions to Mexico, South East Asia and India.

The WSDA International Marketing Program helped exporters sell \$96 million of food and agricultural products in fiscal year 2010. The program continues to pay for itself, with \$3.86 in additional tax revenues due to economic development for every taxpayer dollar invested in the program.

For more information about WSDA's export assistance programs, visit www.agr.wa.gov/marketing.
###